

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 are pending in the application.

In response to the outstanding Office Action claim 6 has been canceled and claims 1-5 and 7-10 have been amended.

As can be seen from the amended claims, the present invention has several distinctive features listed below:

a) The device and method of the present invention collect information concerning mounting of circuit boards at a housing. Particularly, the information includes whether each circuit board is mounted in a predetermined position at the housing.

b) A plurality of optical signal-processing elements are provided, cascaded one after another along a path of the optical signal.

c) Each optical signal-processing element processes the optical signal passing through it in a manner that depends on the position and/or condition of the circuit board.

d) A mounting information-collecting unit receives the optical signal that has traveled through the plurality of optical signal-processing elements and determines the positions and/or conditions of circuit boards being mounted at the housing by identifying how the optical signal has been processed by the optical signal-processing elements.

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Tachikawa (5,329,359).

Claims 2-5 and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Tachikawa in view of Tsuda et al. (6,005,965).

Tachikawa teaches an inspection method for inspecting a height posture of parts mounted on a circuit board, not the circuit boards in the housing. Tachikawa provides moving means for moving a stage holding the circuit board, a light source and an optical system which irradiates the parts with the laser beam from the light source and determines an inclined posture of the parts by comparison of the reference signals obtained at different positions of the parts.

Tachikawa is totally silent about collecting the information on whether or not any part, specifically a circuit board, is mounted at the housing.

Tachikawa also fails to suggest the above distinguishable features a) to d) of the present invention.

Thus the rejection of claims 1 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 should be withdrawn.

Tsuda et al. discloses an inspection apparatus for semiconductor packages. The apparatus varies the emission spectrum of an oblique imaging illumination and a plan view imaging illumination from each other. The apparatus includes a first filter positioned on the optical path from a semiconductor package to an oblique imaging device and which passes light from the oblique imaging illumination and blocks light from the plan view imaging illumination. A second filter passes light from the imaging illumination and blocks light from the oblique imaging illumination. A control unit inspects terminals of the semiconductor package based on data of the oblique imaging device and the plan imaging device.

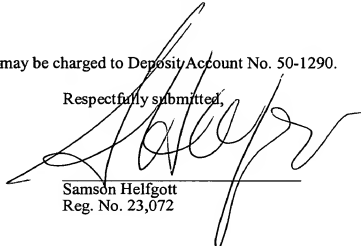
Tsuda et al. also, even if taken in combination with Tachikawa fails to suggest applicant's inventive features a) through d).

It is respectfully suggested that claims 1-5 and 7-10 are patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helfgott', is written over a horizontal line.

Samson Helfgott
Reg. No. 23,072

CUSTOMER NUMBER 026304

Katten Muchin Zavis Rosenman
575 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022-2585
(212) 940-8703
Docket No.: FUJR 19.184 (100794-00086)
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